



December 1, 2007

The Honorable David Long
President Pro Tem
Indiana State Senate
State House
Indianapolis, IN 46204

The Honorable B. Patrick Bauer
Speaker of the House
Indiana House of Representatives
State House
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Dear Senator Long and Representative Bauer:

In accordance with IC 20-10.1-25.1, this letter provides you with an annual update of progress on the Buddy System Project administered by the Corporation for Educational Technology (CET).

As business and governmental leaders of the State of Indiana works tirelessly to improve our positioning for the future of the state with economic development strategies, it is imperative that we recognize that the skills of the workforce, a major determinant of our success, are tied to the skills we are developing in today's K12 students. CET is committed to assuring that our students have ample opportunities to learn effectively and efficiently by engaging whenever possible with relevant technology to improve learning and develop lifelong skills.

The attached report portrays an exceptional year for the project now in our 20th year of existence. CET performs its work in alignment with and in support of the Indiana Department of Education, focusing its activities on facilitating student academic achievement and growing our professional development capacity to provide training and resources to teachers across the state of Indiana. All of our new and continued activities align with PL 221 and the *No Child Left Behind* legislation to better serve the needs of education in our state.

As the nation's first and foremost endeavor to extend learning beyond the classroom, Buddy has provided learning opportunities to over 60,000 Hoosier youngsters in one or more of our initiatives and training to more than 15,000 educators from all 92 counties. We

also maintain four websites available to Indiana youth and teachers, providing expertise, best practices and classroom ideas through Websites dedicated to integrated instruction with technology, writing skills, and technology skills assessment.

Buddy² now operates several different projects and the attached report provides a brief synopsis of a few of those efforts:

- Our BTLC training center established to effect share best practices in teaching and learning with technology.
- Our award winning website, www.buddyproject.org, which provides free technology-based teaching and learning resources
- Our website, <http://thewritingsite.org>, which provides K-12 writing resources and an interactive tutorial for holistic assessment of student writing using ISTEP+ rubrics
- Our *Write Connections* quarterly newsletter publications on writing instruction

We have several improvements currently underway for the coming year of the program and look forward to continued growth in project effectiveness. Our project objectives for the current year, 2007-08 as approved by our Board of Directors are attached. Though budget cuts have limited the scope of our operations, we are excited by our results and the projects we have undertaken. We have been capably represented by your respective chambers by Senators. David Ford and Lindel Hume and Representatives. Cindy Noe, Terri Austin and Greg Porter.

We are a small organization, operating with limited funding. However, we never lose sight of our mission to promote and provide leadership to schools and students so that Indiana moves in the direction of a world-class education system. We act in collaborative partnerships with other agencies and organizations, most recently with the Center for Excellence in Leadership and Learning (CELL) in the planning requirements for the New Tech High Schools, three of which are being introduced in Indiana this year and two more next fall. Additionally, as specified in the Indiana Code, we operate at the direction of the State Superintendent to provide services and support to projects that that office deems necessary. Through this relationship, we provide quality support systems and services for effective technology integration that are not redundant with the department's mission and goals. For example, this current year we are developing web-based tools for schools to assess the NCLB requirement for 8th grade technology literacy. There is currently no assessment instrument for local schools to determine compliance, yet our schools report 100% of eighth graders are technically literate to some unknown standard. We are teaming with DOE experts and representatives from local schools to design and build appropriate instruments. In this capacity, CET fills a role of an organization that can respond quickly and seeks outside funding support for the funding requirements of such an effort. By staying within our mission and assuming a leadership role, we are responsive to the expressed needs of local school districts.

Additionally, and on a personal note, I, as president of CET, chaired during the past year the efforts of the Indiana Education Technology Council (ETC) as an appointee of Governor

Daniels and of Superintendent Suellen Reed. The Council over a year's time period diligently developed a comprehensive strategy for improving the utilization of technology in our K12 schools, the *Digital-Age Learning Plan*. The council consisted of 18 distinguished representatives from many walks of life and was also appointed by Governor Daniels and Dr. Reed. With their efforts, they articulated what became a master plan for developing 21st Century skills for all of our K12 students using technology as a foundation for changes in our schools and classrooms. Unfortunately, given the other needs and priorities of K12 education in our state, such as full day kindergarten funding, the legislature was unable to consider funding a pilot of the program. If the Council is formed once again this year, we would want that group to look at changes to the plan to better accommodate the thought that continuing scarce resources will likely be available, yet the needs of our schools to adopt strategies which better provide students with 21st Century skills is paramount. Again, the Lilly Endowment funded the costs of preparing the *Digital Age Learning Plan* without the use of taxpayer dollars.

We again thank you for the generous support your offices have always given the project and we look forward to serving the state with the exciting mission we have undertaken. If there are questions about the report or the project, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Marvin E. Bailey, President

Cc: Dr. Suellen Reed
CET Board of Directors

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Buddy Mission Statement

Buddy develops and facilitates leading edge learning projects in K-12 school communities to increase student achievement using technology in anytime, anywhere settings. Buddy initiatives aim to share best practices among educators, strengthen family involvement in education, and extend learning beyond the bounds of school time and place. Buddy values and supports equal access to learning technologies regardless of socioeconomic realities.

The Buddy System Project began in 1988 by providing home technology to 250 families and teacher training in five school communities through a partnership of public and private institutions. Since that time, Buddy has served over 60,000 students in one or more Buddy initiatives. Buddy has provided programming, special project facilitation and training services to more than 15,000 educators from all 92 Indiana counties through its grants, professional development center, outreach training programs and conferences. Buddy's award-winning website, www.buddyproject.org, provides free teaching and learning resources to over 1,700 visitors daily.¹ Buddy programs, projects, services and publications each express one or more of its original core values:

- Learning opportunities beyond classroom time and place;
- Technology as a tool to support learning goal achievement;
- Parent involvement in the education of their children;
- Equal access to technology resources for all students and teachers; and
- Reflective practice of teaching and learning for continuous improvement.

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The Corporation for Educational Technology, established in 1991, to administer the Buddy Project and support other Indiana Department of Education technology-based programs, has enjoyed the support of the Indiana General Assembly since that time. Statewide economic crises and significant state budget cuts sharply reduced its ability to fund major school or home technology grant programs. Buddy has, however, responsibly used its small budget² to develop training programs and support materials accessible to all Indiana educators, students and parents. Perhaps more importantly, Buddy continues to provide leadership and guidance to Indiana schools in making appropriate choice and use of educational technologies for increased student engagement and toward improved academic achievement.



The Writing Site: Launched in mid 2005, this site was developed by Buddy to address an expressed need (IDoE, Indiana schools) for a comprehensive resource to assist teachers in writing instruction and assessment. At that time, Buddy was completing a 5-year research and development program focused on writing skill development at grades 3 through 8. The project developed quality classroom instruction strategies, leveraged by use of home-based technology and family involvement to drive attention to writing skill development.³ As part of the R&D effort Buddy collected over 10,000 writing samples that were used as a base to develop an interactive scoring tutorial and exemplars for use by all Indiana teachers and students at www.thewritingsite.org. In 2006-2007 Buddy expanded the tutorial to include

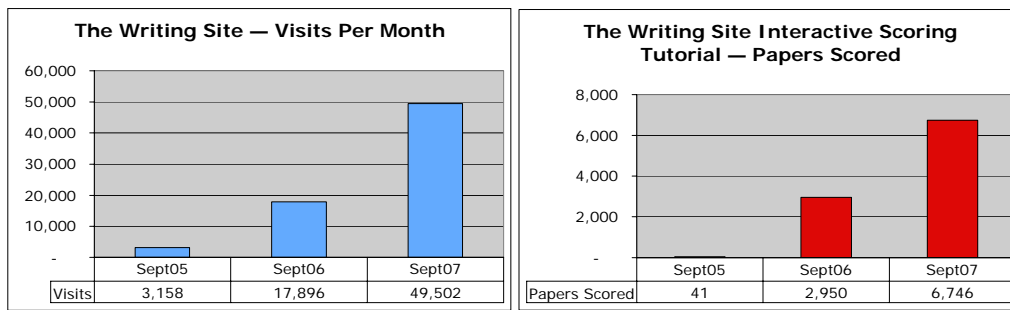
¹ Data from WebTrends monthly report for September 2007 – Average daily visits for that month were 1,786.

² Since 2001, Buddy has received just \$825 K per year, down from \$1.5M in annual funding during the 1990's.

³ Major achievement gains were noted when schools, teachers and students frequently and deliberately practiced writing. See annual reports from 2003 through 2006 for achievement data of this project.

[practice sets for the full K-12 spectrum and added site content that supports quality instruction philosophies, strategies and tools for all grade levels. Through targeted promotion and training exposure of the site's features, usage has significantly increased over the past year as is shown by the charts below.](#)

[Each September, teachers and students prepare for the ISTEP+ standardized test, which includes a writing performance test that is assessed against Indiana's Writing Applications and Language Conventions rubrics. The interactive tutorial at *The Writing Site* uses real student writing samples and provides specific feedback regarding the assessment by Indiana ISTEP+ rubrics. Since the site's inception, this feature has rapidly become a favored preparation tool for the applied writing skill test by Indiana educators.](#)



[A companion to *The Writing Site* and a mechanism to develop original content for the site is Buddy's quarterly newsletter, *Write Connections*, delivered in three versions for primary, elementary or secondary teachers. Individual subscriptions have doubled from 500 in September 2006 to over 1,000 in September 2007. The newsletter features strategies and suggestions for writing instruction across the curriculum as well as ideas to increase family involvement in the supporting instruction at home. Article contributions from Indiana teachers are encouraged.](#)



[***Buddy Teaching and Learning Center \(BTLC\):*** Buddy has maintained a training center since 1995, first hosted by Butler University College of Education, then by the Central Indiana Education Service Center, and now \(as of October 2007\), by MSD Decatur Township. The BTLC](#)

[serves teachers from all Indiana counties through three integrated services:](#)

- [BTLC onsite classes — 404 teachers in 2006-2007](#)
- [BTLC regional training \(offered at regional education service centers\) — 365 teachers \(06-07\)](#)
- [BTLC outreach training \(offered at individual schools & districts\) — 350 teachers \(06-07\)](#)

[During 2006-2007 the BTLC trained over 1,100 Indiana educators,⁴ grades K-12, in support of technology integration instruction in all content areas. In all cases, trainees are encouraged to return to their districts and share their learning with colleagues.](#)

[CampMoodle 2007: Moodle⁵ is free web server software that provides a course framework for teachers to manage classroom and online resources or full courses of instruction. Buddy responded to the oft-heard request for more intensive training opportunities for Indiana teachers](#)

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⁴ Attendance statistics are for July 2006 through June 2007 at single day workshops and multi-day institutes.

⁵ Moodle is the registered trademark of the Moodle Trust and Martin Dougiamas. Software may be downloaded and used at no charge for non-profit educational purposes.

to develop Moodle-based resources. Buddy used its mini-grant funds (nearly \$80,000 for the biennium) to provide professional development grants that supported 53 Indiana educators from 30 schools in 25 school corporations with the opportunity to spend a full week developing courses for use during 2007-2008. These training camps, held in Indianapolis in July and early August 2007, served 70 educators from Indiana schools, and included options for university credit or CRUs to meet licensing requirements.

The following initiatives are currently underway or are planned for implementation in 2007-2008:

- Moodle core resources — develop course templates, activities, test item banks, etc. supportive of Indiana Academic Standards and make them easily accessible
- Et Cetera — Monthly e-newsletter for Indiana educators to inform about educational best practices, grant and professional development opportunities
- Website: www.buddyproject.org — Redesign and expand to cover full PreK-12 grade levels spectrum promoting appropriate technology integration in all content areas
- Technology Skill Assessment — work with IDoE and other stakeholders to investigate issues and implement improved assessment of student technology skills

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Buddy will continue to serve Indiana citizenry with quality training, publications and web-based resources of benefit to the educational growth of Indiana teachers, students and their families in the coming year.

Buddy Implementation Goals & Objectives for 2007-2008

Buddy Teaching & Learning Center

- Develop new series for support of Project Based Learning – 3 workshops
- Develop Web 2.0 integration workshops – 3 workshops
- Develop modules for Moodle training for onsite and online training – 10 workshops
- Train Indiana teachers through BTLC, Regional & BTLC Outreach programming – 1,100 teachers
- Generate \$45 K in revenue (registration fees & Outreach fees) to meet budget requirements
- Move BTLC facility to MSD Decatur Twp. – October 2007
- Promote this low-cost professional development service through conference booths, presentations, listservs and e-newsletters – HECC, ICE, ITW, ILF conferences, IASP, AIME, Buddy, IAEA, ICE, HECC listservs

The Writing Site

- Add additional secondary scoring samples to the online collection. – 6 complete sets
- Add content to support writing instruction at grades K-12 – 40 pages
- Develop new section called “Writing Remedies” to address specific writing deficiencies. – 12 pages
- Promote use of The Writing Site through conference presentations & training sessions – ITW, ICE, ILF, ESC training, etc.

Website redesign for www.buddyproject.org

- Overhaul and redesign www.buddyproject.org to encompass PreK-12 content (currently is predominantly 3-8 content)
- Style for PreK-12 audience, improve navigability
- Visible changes by February 2008, redesign complete in June 2008

Moodle Core Resources

- Develop a core collection of sample courses, course templates, course activity modules for use by Indiana teachers to guide Moodle development. – Showcase site, a variety of downloads, all content areas for secondary schools. (Some elementary examples will also be included.)
- Develop and post for download “How-to” guides for Moodle development. – 18 topical guides
- Make all of above resources available on www.buddyproject.org website. — April 2008

Et Cetera: An e-Newsletter

- Develop and publish a monthly e-newsletter featuring newsbytes regarding technology innovation, instructional best practice, Indiana school technology implementation examples, grant opportunities, training opportunities and more.
- Partner on this with Indiana Computer Educators (ICE), Hoosier Educational Computing Coordinators (HECC), Indiana Department of Education (IDoE) and perhaps other Indiana organizations.
- Build to 1,500 subscribers in year one, First issue – October 2007

Technology Assessment

- Form a collaborative committee (IDoE, CET, University, K-12 reps)
- Discuss and investigate issues surrounding technology literacy for Indiana students
 - Assessment of skills
 - Attainment of skills
 - NCLB expectations & requirements
 - Indiana business, industry and higher education expectations & requirements
- Formulate a plan to address and fill gaps in Indiana Academic Standards, frameworks and assessments
- Seek outside funding to develop solutions